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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR X0XX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#)1. Mideast
- [1](#)2. Likud Infighting

Key stories in the media:

All major media, except Jerusalem Post, led with a comment made by PM Sharon before 150 Likud Central Committee members at his Jerusalem residence last night: "I don't want to leave [the party]." However, various media noted that he once again refrained from saying he would remain in the Likud under any conditions, even if he lost Monday's vote to advance the party primary. Sharon's adviser Eyal Arad hinted to IDF Radio this morning that Sharon may quit the Likud if he loses in that vote.

Jerusalem Post quoted UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan as saying after a ministerial level meeting of the Quartet in New York: "What happens in the West Bank is very much on our mind. For us, the Quartet, it's Gaza first and then the next stage will be the West Bank, not Gaza first and Gaza last." The newspaper quoted a spokesman for Sharon as saying in response that what comes after disengagement depends entirely now on how the Palestinians handle their newfound responsibilities. The official was quoted as saying: "If they want Gaza to be first, and not last, then this experiment must succeed." Leading media reported that the Quartet urged the PA to "maintain law and order and dismantle terrorist capabilities and infrastructure." Israel Radio quoted Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as saying that this is a "Palestinian process." Ha'aretz quoted a senior State Department official, who asked not to be identified, as saying: "The democratic practice ought to be that armed groups do not participate in the political process."

Israel Radio quoted Minister-without-Portfolio Haim Ramon (Labor) as saying, at a meeting convened by Vice Premier Shimon Peres on Tuesday, that Israel will not allow the construction of a port in Gaza if understandings are not reached between Israel and the PA regarding security issues. Ramon reportedly said that Israel should demand supervision over movements in the harbor. Ramon was also quoted as saying that Israel must operate the Nitzana terminal and refrain from spending 60 million shekels (approximately USD 13 million) to build a terminal for goods at Kerem Shalom. The radio quoted Peres as saying at the meeting that the PA and Egypt have announced that they hope to control the breaches along the Philadelphia road within two days and prevent free passage of people along the route. Israel Radio later reported that Egypt and the PA will reopen the Rafah crossing on Friday to Egyptians and Palestinians during a two-day period. The radio quoted the PA's National Security Adviser Jibril Rajoub as saying that the purpose of the move is to allow residents who were caught next to the border

crossing when it was sealed last week to return home. Israel Radio reported that senior Egyptian and Palestinian officials will meet in a week in order to finalize the arrangement at the Rafah border.

Israel Radio and Ha'aretz's web site reported that Brig. Gen. Yossi Kuperwasser, the head of IDF Military Intelligence's Research Division, told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee this morning that, despite fears to the contrary, powerful "tie-breaker weaponry," such as long-range Katyusha rockets and shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles, was not smuggled into the Gaza Strip when the Egyptian border was left largely open in the days following the Israeli withdrawal. Leading media quoted Kuperwasser as saying at the meeting that thousands of rifles were smuggled into the Gaza Strip during that period. Yediot reported that the prices of weaponry in the Gaza Strip have dropped in recent days by over 50 percent, due to the fact that the breached border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip on Philadelphia Road has caused Gaza to be flooded with weaponry from Egypt.

Israel Radio reported on a fiery exchange of words between Israel and Iran at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday. The station reported that FM Silvan Shalom dubbed the Islamic Republic an "evil regime ruled by Tehran's tyrants" and called upon the UN Security Council to rein in Iran before it procures nuclear weapons. The radio quoted Iranian representative Ahmad Sadeghi as saying that Israel is a "Zionist regime ruled by war criminals." He was quoted as saying that Israel's nuclear weapons and missile capability, combined with its demonic intentions, threaten regional and world peace. Israel's representative to the UN Danny Gillerman cynically replied that he greatly admires the Iranian lecture on human rights, terror, and proliferation of nuclear weapons delivered by one of the greatest experts in those fields.

Ha'aretz quoted FM Shalom as saying on Tuesday, in an address to the UN General Assembly, that diplomatic ties and cooperation with Israel are essential prerequisites for any country that wishes to help the Palestinians. Yediot quoted Shalom's comment in his address that the "iron wall between us and the Arab states is falling." Yediot quoted Shalom as saying, during a meeting with Annan, that Israel will submit in the next few days its candidacy for membership in the UN Security Council.

All media reported that Attorney General Menachem Mazuz has begun looking into dozens of complaints alleging that Sharon collected illegal campaign contributions at a banquet held in his honor in New York. Leading media reported that State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss announced Tuesday evening in a letter to the Knesset his willingness to immediately investigate allegations in the matter.

Jerusalem Post reported that King Abdullah II of Jordan is set to speak with a group of American rabbis in Washington today, as part of his ongoing effort to build bridges between Muslims, Jews, and Christians.

Jerusalem Post reported that 28 Jewish leaders from eight countries met Monday in London to strategize an international campaign to "assert the rights of former Jewish refugees from Arab countries." Jerusalem Post reported that Stanley Urman, president of Justice for Jews from Arab Countries, told the newspaper that the ultimate goal of the campaign is to link Jewish refugees with Palestinian refugees in peace talks.

Yediot quoted Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as saying Monday that last week's confidential meeting between FM Shalom and Indonesian FM Noer Hassan Wirajuda was "consistent with the interests of the entire world and with those of the Muslim world in particular." Maariv reported that representatives of the Tourism Ministry held a meeting this week with Foreign Ministry officials and asked them not to inflate incidents such as Qassam and Katyusha rocket fire. "Don't make a big deal of every Qassam," the Tourism Ministry officials reportedly said. "You are destroying Israel's tourist industry."

Yediot reported that Israel has strongly protested to the Swedish government over the fact that Swedish FM Laila Freivalds will be the keynote speaker at an anti-Israeli conference about the "wall" that Israel is building in the territories. The meeting, which the newspaper writes is organized by the "Swedish trade union," will take place in 10 days.

Israel Radio reported that IDF forces have apprehended six Islamic Jihad activists in the refugee camp of Nur a-Shams near Tulkarm. The radio said that the arrested men had been involved in recent terrorist attacks in Netanya and Tel Aviv.

Leading media reported that the head of the Tafnit organization, Maj. Gen. (res.) Uzi Dayan, presented his plan for the separation of Israel and the Palestinians at a press conference in Tel Aviv on Tuesday. Under the proposal, the separation fence in the West Bank would be completed and Israel would evacuate 32 settlements containing 20,000 residents within three years. The IDF would redeploy along a temporary border. [NB: The political movement Tafnit, founded by Uzi Dayan, aims to promote socio-civic and national security agendas.]

Jerusalem Post quoted Vice PM and acting Finance Minister Ehud Olmert as saying Tuesday that Israel is close to signing a free trade agreement with the Mercado Comun del Sur (Mercosur) in South America.

Ha'aretz reported that, "in a surprise move," the State Department announced on Tuesday that it expects to fill its quota of visas in the Employment Based Third Preference (E3) Immigrant Visa Category by next month. The newspaper says that the visas are allotted to professionals with a B.A. degree. Maariv and other media also reported on the matter. Israel Radio reported that on Tuesday, President Bush expressed his sadness over the "death of Simon Wiesenthal, a tireless and passionate advocate who devoted his life to tracking down Nazi killers and promoting freedom."

1. Mideast:

Summary:

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "Abbas's plan is unacceptable to the government of Israel. However, Israel must avoid deepening the internal rifts in Palestinian society, and work to strengthen Abbas as a partner in the diplomatic process."

Senior columnist Haggai Huberman wrote in nationalist, Orthodox Hatzofe: "A diplomatic program based on the unilateral dismantling of 32 settlements without getting anything in exchange ... is yet another program of the Left."

Block Quotes:

1I. "Help Abbas"

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (September 21): "Israel's position is that participation in elections to the Palestine Legislative Council, which is the Palestinian Authority's parliament, requires Hamas to disarm and abrogate its basic manifesto that calls for the political annihilation of Israel. If Hamas does not do so, Sharon says, Israel will not prevent the elections, but will give them no support. Israel's position is logical, correct and justified. Since its establishment some 17 years ago, the Hamas movement has declared all-out war on the 'Zionist entity,' out of a belief that all of Israel is Muslim sacred ground and not one inch should be given up. To this end the movement initiated and justified acts of terror and murderous suicide attacks. Even though it has agreed over the past few months to a cease-fire, it has not given up its declared goals.... The concern of Israel and Abbas over Hamas's growing strength is shared by many parties, among whom cooperation can be created. Abbas has avoided a direct clash with Hamas, which he believes would result in civil war among the Palestinians. He is asking to absorb armed Hamas members, numbering about 3,000, into the approximately 40,000 or more Palestinian police and soldiers in Gaza. Abbas believes that without its military units, Hamas will be transformed from a terror organization to a political party. Abbas's plan is unacceptable to the government of Israel. However, Israel must avoid deepening the internal rifts in Palestinian society, and work to strengthen Abbas as a partner in the diplomatic process. Abbas was elected for a four-year term as a

powerful chairman with wide-ranging authority, and all processes involving elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council should and must be coordinated with him."

II. "No Message"

Senior columnist Haggai Huberman wrote in nationalist, Orthodox Hatzofe (September 21): "On Tuesday, [Maj. Gen. (res.)] Uzi Dayan founded another left-wing party, whose platform isn't very different from those of most Israeli left-wing parties, including Sharon's faction in the Likud. A diplomatic program based on the unilateral dismantling of 32 settlements without getting anything in exchange, and the determination that in any case this would be an interim border that would change during final-status negotiations, is yet another program of the Left, with minor debates as to whether the border would cross a hill on the left side or another one on the right side. Uzi Dayan didn't convey any special point on Tuesday, except for some hints that, in order to reform Israel, people should vote for him and [his movement]."

12. Likud Infighting:

Summary:

Chief economic editor Sever Plotker opined in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Like a shepherd who knows his flock, Sharon is certain that he knows the collective soul of the Likud Central Committee and the trend of opinion there."

Block Quotes:

"The Undivided Land of Israel in Exchange for Jobs"

Chief economic editor Sever Plotker opined in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (September 21): "Sharon surprised everybody. [Instead of founding a new party or returning to the hard core of Likud], he pulled a third option, astonishing in its originality, out of the hat -- to run for re-election inside the Likud, with the political worldview of Meretz.... Sharon is certain that he will win, this time without misleading the voters. Like a shepherd who knows his flock, Sharon is certain that he knows the collective soul of the Likud Central Committee and the trend of opinion there. Today it is a skeleton party, devoid of ideology, and the only fuel in its engine is the burning desire to hold onto the reins of power. Nothing remains of that historic Likud except the name. In Poland, between the two world wars, there was a broad-based party in power called 'the non-party bloc for the government.' There is no more appropriate name for the Likud in its present situation. So that is the alternative which Sharon has been offering, since his return from New York, to the members of the Likud Central Committee: territory or jobs, nationalist ideology or a good living, love for the Land of Israel, or the love of the trappings of power. Like any wily farmer Sharon knows which they will choose. They will not give up the jobs. They will give up Karnei Shomron [a key settlement]."

JONES